

**Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Belmont Town Hall, Room 4
Thursday Evening, April 2, 2009, 7:30 p.m.**

Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m. Members of the Committee present at the time of the call to order were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, Jennifer M. Fallon, Daniel Leclerc and Ann Rittenburg. Also present were Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and staff liaison to the Capital Budget Committee, and Glenn R. Clancy, Director of Community Development. Anne Marie Mahoney joined the meeting during Mr. Clancy's presentation. Thomas Younger, Town Administrator, and John Conte joined the meeting before the discussion with Mr. Clancy had been completed.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda for the meeting prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary.

Mr. Clancy and Mrs. Brusch distributed additional items (mentioned below) before they spoke.

Interview with Glenn R. Clancy
(Item 2 on Committee Agenda)

Mr. Clancy, Director of Community Development, began by distributing two items. The first (two sheets) is captioned "Pavement Management Five Year Plan." The second item (one sheet) is labeled "Pavement Management Program - FY 10 Worksheet." Mr. Clancy pointed out that the first three entries on the first item should be stricken. They relate to Oakley Road and Sycamore Street. They are classified on the sheet as "Minor Collector 2"; however, the vehicle count on those streets drops their categories to neighborhood streets which cannot be included in the five-year plan.

Mrs. Brusch explained that Mrs. Mahoney would join this meeting after a restructuring committee meeting and Mr. Conte was on his way from Connecticut. Mrs. Brusch also explained that three topics would be on the table during the discussion with Mr. Clancy. First, there would be the general question of what the Town proposes to do about Pavement Management in view of the fact that the voters turned down the proposed override to fund the Pavement Management program. Second, there is the question of what to do about the driveway at the High School. Third, there is the question of what to do about the needs of the Library for walk way and curb repairing.

The discussion with Mr. Clancy was detailed and lengthy. During that discussion, the following points were made and a general consensus developed concerning the next

steps to be taken. Prior to the last year's failed override vote, the Town had adopted a program of concentrating on heavily travelled roadways. That program included sidewalk and curbing. Now the Selectmen have directed Mr. Clancy to omit new sidewalk work and curbing (thus concentrating on the traveled roadway surface only). Mr. Clancy will make some exceptions for handicap ramps at corners and for flood control. As noted previously, the streets eliminated from the Department's five-year plan did not make the traffic count needed to remain in the Department's plans. Mr. Clancy estimated that as much as 40% of his budget had been devoted to sidewalks and curbing and that this portion would be freed for expenditure on the travel surface. Mr. Clancy stated that this is the first winter that it is obvious that to him road work is not able to keep pace with road deterioration. Because the Belmont Street/Trapelo Road corridor is a state-funded project, these restrictions do not apply to that project which will include curbs, sidewalks and trees.

The Belmont Street/Trapelo Road corridor project was originally scheduled for FY12, thus giving plenty of time to do necessary water and sewer work in that corridor before paving. Recently, so-called "stimulus money" has become available to fund that project and the would-be developer of a project in Cushing Square has withdrawn a proposal for reverse diagonal parking . The project is, therefore, ready to go from 25% design to 75% design approval. As a result, the project is now on an accelerated schedule, and getting the water and sewer work done in time will be a challenge. It appears that the funds necessary for that work will exhaust the funds available for water and sewer work for the next several years.

In general, the Town makes a significant effort to be sure that all sewer and water work is done on a roadway before it is repaved in order to avoid digging up a recently repaved road. However, even at the low borrowing rate (2%) currently available to the Sewer Division, the necessary work will create a deficit for the Sewer Division within two years. Mr. Clancy will be meeting with Ralph Jones (one of the Town's Selectmen) and William Pisano (a Belmont citizen and member of the former Sewer and Stormwater Advisory Committee with whom Mr. Clancy consults from time to time) to discuss this situation. Mr. Clancy emphasized that the need for coordinating with water and sewer work is one of the factors that makes pavement management difficult, particularly since he has resources to spend only on roadways that meet certain criteria.

Although the budget must be prepared on a fiscal year basis, Mr. Clancy's statistics and figures are presented on a calendar year basis. The cycle for pavement management regularly spans more than one fiscal year; contracts are awarded later in the fiscal year in which money becomes available but by then it is already late winter in the next calendar year. Work under that contract typically begins a bit later but may not finish until the end of the outdoor construction season in the fall (which is within the same calendar year as the year in which the contract was awarded but in the next fiscal year after the fiscal year in which the money first became available). Mr. Clancy's emphasized several times the fluidity that has prevailed in the last few years as far as pavement management budgets are concerned and the difficulty of managing pavement in that context. Mrs. Bruschi and Ms. Fallon emphasized the need to avoid a situation in

which it might appear to taxpayers that the Community Development Department has money on hand for pavement management. Currently, Mr. Clancy has available \$2.8 million. He expects that the contracts soon to be awarded will be about \$2.6 million, leaving some cushion for overruns and police details. All of the money available to him will be committed, if not technically encumbered, by the time of the next override vote, set for June of this year.

The amount devoted to Pavement Management from the funds allocated to this Committee should be \$1,077,000 rather than the \$1 million shown on the spreadsheet with which the Committee is working. One million dollars was the amount of the override upon which this allocation is based but should be escalated as this Committee's entire allocation of funds is escalated to reflect the growth allowed under so-called Proposition 2½. A discussion arose as to whether the escalation should be calculated from the date of the original override but it was pointed out that this Committee's entire allocation has been escalated only in recent years.

During the discussion of the High School driveway, it became evident that there is a consensus among the members of the Committee that some way should be found to repair at least the worst section of the driveway. The Committee indicated that the work is to be included within the contracts Mr. Clancy is arranging and managing on behalf of the Town even if payment of that work is to come from a separate budget. Meanwhile, the School Department has revised its request for this project from a \$100,000 of work to \$65,000 of work. (This revised estimate is based upon a square-yard factor supplied by Mr. Clancy.) Ms. Fallon will coordinate the School Department personnel with the personnel of the Community Development and the Public Works Departments in an effort to address the problem of the High School driveway.

Similarly, the Committee wishes to address the needs of the Library through the contracts and capabilities available to the Community Development Department and the Department of Public Works. The Committee also wishes to remain mindful of the fact that the current main Library building may eventually be devoted to another Town use. It is very unlikely that any improvements that are made currently to the walkways, parking, curbing and driveways of the Library will remain useful for another project. The Committee asked Mr. Younger to coordinate an effort by the Town to address the concerns of the Library.

April 2009 Warrant
(Item 4 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch distributed copies of a draft of the Warrant for 2009 Annual Town Meeting, identified as "final draft - rev. 4/2/09." She ascertained from Mr. Younger that this draft contains certain corrections found necessary in the previous draft. Mrs. Brusch then proceeded to identify those Articles upon which this Committee should opine. The Committee discussion included uncertainties in the budgeting process and the probable deferral of some articles until a resumed session of Town Meeting in June.

Article 8, involving so-called chapter 90 funds, is a Capital Budget Committee item but will be taken up in June.

Article 9, involving the capital budget, is also a Capital Budget Committee matter but will also be taken up in June.

Likewise, Article 10 (appropriation for water and sewer services) is a Capital Budget Committee item which will be taken up in June.

A motion duly made and seconded to recommend favorable action on Article 12 (communications tower bond de-authorization) was adopted unanimously.

Similarly, with regard to Article 21 (transfer of the custody of the Benton branch library building), upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee voted to recommend favorable action.

Article 22 (appropriation for VFW space agreement payments) engendered a great deal of discussion which ended without a Committee vote when Mrs. Mahoney pointed out that the annual stipend requested (\$7,500) is below the threshold (\$10,000 per item) triggering consideration by this Committee.

Article 24 (MWRA Sewer Loan Authorization) will be taken up in June.

Article 27 (authorization of Wellington School construction) engendered a long discussion. Mrs. Brusch explained the various factors that have contributed to the current confusion and uncertainty with regard to this year's budgeting process and the funding for the Wellington School project in particular. The current article is contingent on voter approval of an override proposal that will probably be put on a ballot for June 8. At the same time, there will probably be an override proposal on behalf of the current operating budget. Meanwhile, the adjourned Town Meeting will probably be called for June 1 and 3. The current thinking is that two operating budgets will be proposed at that time. One will be applicable if the proposed override vote fails; the other will be applicable if they proposed override vote succeeds. In like manner, the Wellington article is contingent upon approval by the voters of an override proposal. The Committee, therefore, agreed that a Committee vote on Article 27 is appropriate at this time. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend favorable action on Article 27.

Discussion of Schedule *(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)*

In view of the fact that the current budgeting situation is so uncertain and that both the operating and capital budgets will be deferred until a June session of the Town Meeting, the Committee agreed to revise its meeting schedule. The Committee will meet on April 30, May 14 and May 21. The Committee's Report to the Town Meeting will be due on May 18. All meetings before April 30 will be cancelled except that a meeting at

6:00 p.m. prior to the first session of the April 27 Town Meeting will remain posted. (Currently, Mrs. Brusch does not know of any matter to come before this Committee at such a meeting and may cancel that meeting.) Mrs. Brusch had previously pointed out that the Belmont Municipal Electric Light Company had proposed building a new substation on Town property. That proposal will not be presented to Town Meeting until next year but the Electric Light Department will make a presentation making its proposal to the Warrant Committee at 7:30 on April 8, 2009. The members of this Committee are invited to attend.

CBC Written Report for 2009
(Item 6 on Committee Agenda)

Mr. Clark pointed out to the members of the Committee that the topics covered in last year's Report of this Committee are listed on the agenda and he invited email comments with regard to this year's Report. He also advised Mrs. Brusch and Ms. Fallon that he would look to them for revisions regarding the major capital projects facing the Town.

Adjournment
(Item 7 on Committee Agenda)

The meeting was adjourned at about 10:20 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark